

DUGOUT CANOE FROM 1600s DISPLAYED AT OLD TOWN HALL

The canoe is on display at Old Town Hall, 10200 Penn Avenue South. The museum is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon - 4 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays, 1 - 5 p.m.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON *BRIEFING*, DECEMBER 2010

QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVE CITY SERVICES
PLANNING AHEAD CREATES A MORE SUSTAINABLE BLOOMINGTON

By Mayor Gene Winstead

Bloomington, like all communities, has evolved since its inception, continually redeveloping and renewing itself.

In the City’s strategic plan, *Imagine Bloomington 2025*, the City Council used residents’ comments and input to create a vision for Bloomington’s future.

This vision was adopted after merging the key components of Bloomington’s traditions of success – residents, neighborhoods, businesses and government – with the unifying theme of sustainability. The City strives to become a more sustainable community, not only environmentally, but economically and socially, with the City organization being the primary catalyst to provide leadership in four key areas: renewal, infrastructure, services and community building.

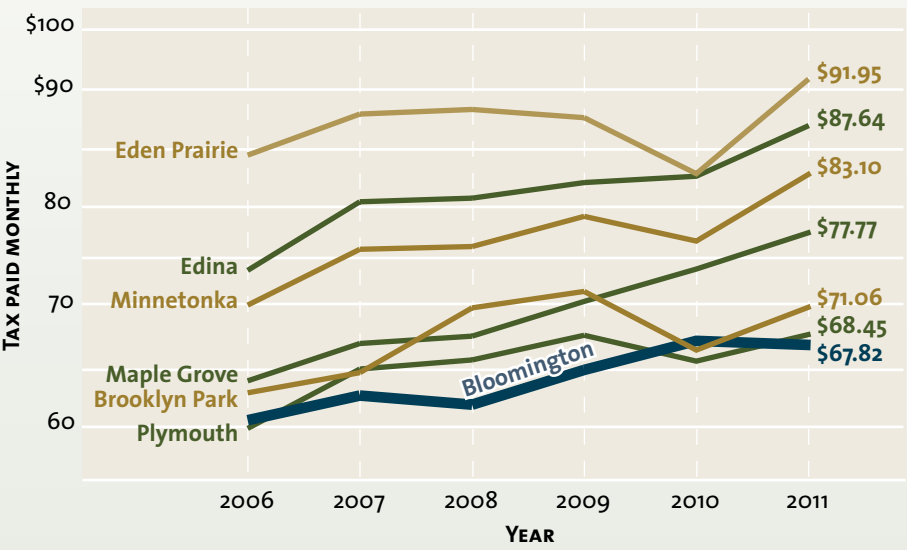
These four key focus areas led to five Council-approved, strategic goals. They include:

- Encouraging sustainable land use.
- Supporting transportation improvements.
- Guiding higher-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development where appropriate.
- Effectively and efficiently engaging resources and continually improving service quality.
- Maintaining a sustainable organization.

Key to the continuing vitality of our community is the quality and consistency of the services the City provides over the long term.

The City’s current mix of essential and quality-of-life services is based on the decisions of City Councils, past and present. While each and every service

CITY PROPERTY TAX ON MEDIAN VALUE SINGLE-FAMILY HOME
Not adjusted for Aids and Fiscal Disparities



The property tax and utility services that Bloomington provides are among the most competitive of comparable communities in Hennepin County.

may not be used by all individuals in the community, the provision of all services helps support the long-term mission of Bloomington to be a safer and more sustainable community.

For example, perhaps you have never experienced the need to use the Fire Department’s services; a portion of your property tax still goes to support this service in case you or your neighbor need fire service assistance in the future.

In times of economic difficulty, such as the current recession, some correctly ask about the cost-effectiveness of City services. This is a question that the City examines on an ongoing basis in both strong and weak economic times.

Bloomington, a city in a large metro area, is in constant competition with surrounding communities for residents and businesses. One way we can stay competitive is on the cost and quality of the services available. Bloomington’s

cost for City services is among the lowest in Hennepin County. When factoring in property tax aids, including Fiscal Disparities, the cost to serve single-family homes in Bloomington is the lowest – even lower than newer communities that have not undertaken or are just now undertaking the costs for renewing and maintaining their communities. Bloomington was ahead of the game by beginning to maintain and renew its infrastructure in 1992 with the Pavement Management Program.

The property tax and utility services that Bloomington provides are among the most competitive of comparable communities in Hennepin County. See comparison graph above.

However, cost is only part of the equation; the quality of services is the other. While more difficult to compare on a quantitative basis, Bloomington’s service quality routinely compares favorably with those in other communities.

City services are of real value to you – the individual residents and businesses in the community. What is received in value from City services is considered by many in the community to be on par with, or exceeding, the value for the cost of other services such as cable television, cell phone and broadband.

While it is tempting to use short-term methods to reduce the monthly property tax cost, such approaches can have severe consequences in terms of cost effectiveness and productivity over the long term.


In guiding Bloomington to a more sustainable future, the City’s main objectives are to provide the best possible services to the community while reinvesting in our infrastructure and in older areas that are no longer competitive in today’s market. In other words, the most prudent course to take during these difficult economic times is, in fact, to stay the course.

To view the City’s financial information, visit the City’s website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: FINANCE.

Volume 18, Number 6

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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

A FEW OF THE CITY’S COMPETITIVELY PRICED SERVICES



City services are cost-competitive with comparable private sector operations. Examples include:

Mowing services – The cost for the City mowing services per acre is half the cost of the competitively bid private contract service.

Street sweeping – The cost to sweep in 2010 was about 86 percent of the 2008 competitively bid private sector contract. (This was the last bid for these services before phasing out the private contract.) Street sweeping is now done exclusively in-house.

Sidewalk snowplowing – In a presentation at the July 12, 2010, Council meeting, available to view on the City’s website, the Public Works Department explained an increase in its level of service and reliability by moving all sidewalk snowplowing in-house and eliminating the private contract service to provide a higher level of service at a better cost.

These are just a few examples of how the City uses resources wisely with more sustainable results.



2011 GENERAL FUND BUDGET
EXPENDITURES TO DROP FOR 2011

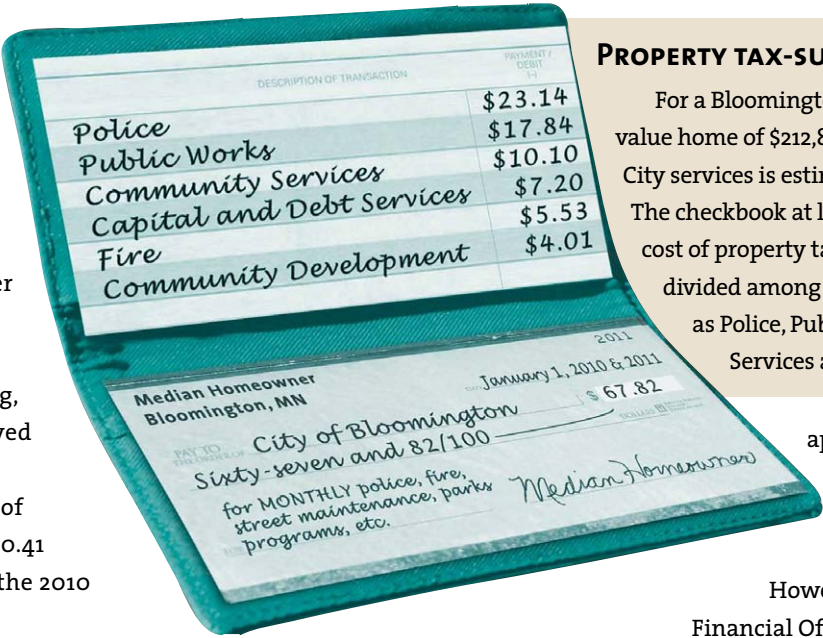
Based on its monthly tracking of revenues and expenditures, the City began the budgeting process earlier this year in order to predict upcoming trends for 2011 - 2012. At a September meeting, the City Council approved a preliminary general operating fund budget of \$54,486,414, that was a 0.41 percent decrease from the 2010 budget of \$54,710,503.

The City Council also approved a preliminary levy of \$44,552,753 for 2011, a 0.12 percent decrease from 2010. The levy decrease comes despite expected revenue losses from state market value homestead credits, permits, interest earnings on investments and unpaid property taxes.

The preliminary levy can be reduced, but not increased, before final adoption in December. The proposed budget represents more preparation earlier in the process than is done in a normal fiscal year.

To maintain City service levels, the City continues ongoing efforts to be cost effective. If the final 2011 levy increase is approved at this preliminary level, the average annual increase in the City's levy from 1996 - 2011 would be 3.72 percent.

For a Bloomington resident with a median



PROPERTY TAX-SUPPORTED SERVICES

For a Bloomington resident with a median value home of \$212,800, the monthly cost of City services is estimated to be \$67.82 for 2011. The checkbook at left shows how the monthly cost of property tax-supported services is divided among City departments such as Police, Public Works, Community Services and Fire.

approximately in half between residential, including apartment uses, and commercial/industrial uses.

However, according to Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler, the current economic climate is having a more variable impact on real estate values of many property types.

"Different types of properties, or even the same types of properties, don't always move in sync and sometimes the burden shifts to the homeowner rather than the commercial property owner," Economy-Scholler said.

The City made adjustments in 2002 through 2010 for declining local revenues.

For more information, contact Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler at 952-563-8791 or e-mail leconomy@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: FINANCE.

A public hearing on the tax levy and budget will be held Monday, December 6 at 6 p.m., in the Council Chambers at Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road.



HELP FOR YOUR HOME
GRANT AND LOAN FUNDS FOR IMPROVING FORECLOSED HOMES

Due to the success of last year's program, the Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) is again offering its Foreclosed Housing Improvement Program (FHIP).

If you are purchasing or have purchased a foreclosed home within the last 12 months, you may be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 for home improvements.

Eligible improvements include, but are not limited to, siding, windows, roofing and mechanical systems.

One-half of the original borrowed amount will not have to be repaid if the recipient lives in the home for five years after receiving the loan. The remaining half will accrue interest at an annual rate of 5 percent for a period of 10 years and will not have to be repaid until the property is no longer the borrower's principal place of residence, or the owner sells or transfers the title.

To obtain an FHIP loan, the home must be your primary residence.

For more information, call 952-563-8937.

To receive the latest updates from HRA, sign up to receive HRA online E-Subscribe alerts.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: HRA.



SUBSCRIBE TO
E-SUBSCRIBE
GET INSTANT CITY INFO

To stay informed about City news, use E-Subscribe. This free subscription service sends e-mails and wireless notifications when updates to the most popular pages on the City's website are posted.

Since April 2009, more than 4,000 users have signed up to receive news and information alerts from the City.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: E-SUBSCRIBE.

RAMBLER REDO SERIES
MAKE A WELCOMING FIRST IMPRESSION



Perhaps the most logical place to start improving your rambler is the first space you encounter when you and your guests arrive at your home: the front entryway.

We all know that first impressions matter. Yet often, a rambler's front door is tucked under the limited overhang of the main roof and the entry door is hidden. This offers very little space to sit and talk to neighbors or find shelter

from the weather when you're fishing through your pockets for your keys.

Adding a porch is a great solution. A porch will enhance your entry area and add curb appeal to your home.

Tan Nguyen from Nguyen Architects offers the following tips for adding value and curb appeal to your rambler home without compromising the character of your home's original design.

When planning an entryway addition:

- 1 Look at the shape of your home's roof. Be sure to use the same roof pitch and type as your entryway.

- 2 Add columns and trim that reflect your personal style.
- 3 Consider replacing your home's siding using two different siding styles to create interest and texture.
- 4 Check with the City's Planning Division for setback requirements before beginning construction.

No matter what updates you choose to make to your rambler home, be sure the renovations reflect your personal style and preferences.

Look for more rambler remodeling tips in the February Briefing.



An updated version of the rambler above left.

Is your family growing too big for your rambler?
Or maybe you just want a little more space, but don't want to sell your home in a down market?
The Rambler Redo series will show you how to address some of the more common updating and remodeling issues in one of the coolest and most common type of home in Bloomington: the rambler.



Public Works Director Karl Keel, Planner Julie Farnham, Civil Engineer Jen Desrude and Councilmember Steve Elkins at the Commuter Choice Awards in Minneapolis.

CHOICE ACCOLADES CITY RECOGNIZED FOR PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

The City of Bloomington was recently honored with two awards at the 2010 Regional Commuter Choice Awards.

The City was recognized for its efforts in finding creative ways to encourage employees' use of alternative transportation. In 2009, the City Council passed a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) ordinance that requires developers, who build a structure with 350 or more parking spaces, to submit a plan documenting how they will promote alternative transportation methods. The ordinance is the first of its kind in Minnesota.

Additionally, the City was honored for partnering with 494 Commuter Services and the I-494 Corridor Commission in the promotion of alternative transportation options.

City of Bloomington Civil Engineer Jen Desrude accepted the Commuter Choice Award, Individual Category, for helping to develop the TDM plan that she currently manages for the City. Desrude was also honored for promoting the use of alternative transportation to City employees through her work with 494 Commuter Services and the creation of an employee commuter group.



A NEW WAY TO WORK 494 COMMUTER SERVICES

Are you considering a different way to get to work everyday? 494 Commuter Services can help by providing the following resources:

- **Ridematch list** – Individuals with a similar work trip who are interesting in sharing the ride.
- **Transit information** – Personalized trip planner, pocket schedules for bus or train, *How To Ride Guide*.
- **Bike commuting** – Map showing recommended on-street bike routes and off-road bike trails, tips for biking to work, Minnesota bike laws.

For more information, visit www.494corridor.org.

Earth Action Heroes protect the earth. Whether it's saving energy or guarding Bloomington's precious natural resources, these individuals are making a difference. Here are your neighbors in action...

EARTH ACTION HEROES THE WATERSHED WARRIORS

In 2008, as part of an ongoing, City-wide effort to be more sustainable, Bloomington Public Works embarked on a journey to reduce the impact of urban runoff through its storm water management practices.

As a result, when it came time to resurface the parking lot at Harrison Park, 1701 West 100th Street, instead of using regular pavement that allows storm water to run off and pollute Nine Mile Creek, the City decided to try an innovative alternative: pervious asphalt pavement and rain gardens.

How is pervious asphalt sustainable?

The pervious asphalt that Public Works used differed from the standard variety in that it contained very little of the fine aggregate that normally creates a dense, impervious pavement. The porous quality of the asphalt and rock base soaks up storm water, reducing annual runoff by 90 percent.



Rain gardens soak up any additional runoff.

Fast forward to two years later, as 250 gallons of water were dumped onto the parking lot and quickly disappeared into the pavement, confirming the pavement's sustainability.

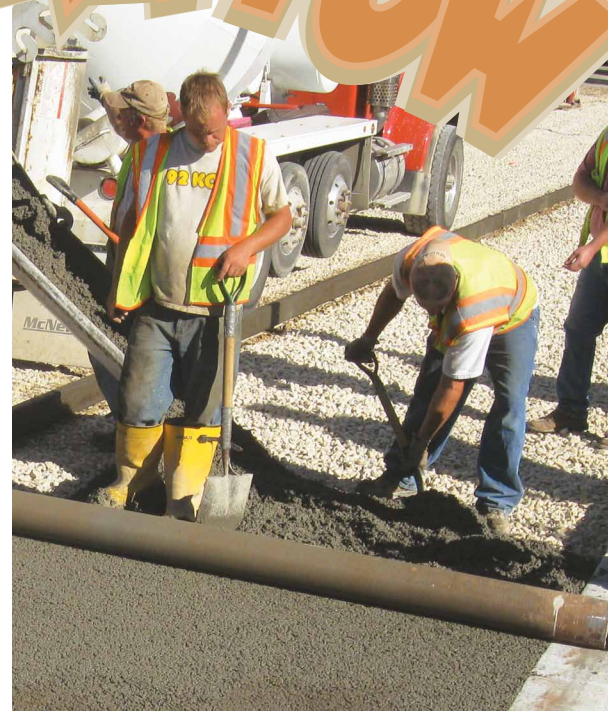
"The project is exceeding our expectations," Senior Engineering Technician Steve Segar said. "People are taking notice. The project site has been toured by local water resource professionals, engineers and municipal officials from all over the state."

There are other benefits to the pervious pavement. In the winter, no sand or salt is required to maintain the lot. A plow removes excess snow, while the remaining snow melts into the pavement.

The pervious parking lot pilot yielded such good results that other areas of the city are being looked at to receive the same treatment.

Developers in the Penn-American District will be using pervious asphalt in portions of their parking lots. The City anticipates that other developers will follow suit.

Public Works decided to use pervious pavement – this time pervious concrete – to repave its parking lot. The pervious concrete, like the pervious asphalt, allows rainwater to infiltrate



the soil instead of running into the storm sewers.

In addition, Public Works has made numerous other changes to improve safety and sustainability. A trellis and canopy were constructed on the east side of the building to reduce glare and save on air conditioning costs.

A rain garden also was created on the north side of the building to capture storm water from the roof and reduce runoff into nearby ponds and streams.

"In previous years, the rainwater drained across the parking lot and into the sewer, creating icy, slippery conditions for employees and visitors to the building," Segar said. "The rain garden should solve this problem."

For more information, call Steve Segar at 952-563-4533.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: SUSTAINABILITY.

YOU CAN BE A WATERSHED HERO STOP STORM WATER WHERE IT DROPS

What is a watershed? A watershed is an area of land from which rain and melted snow drain into a lake, wetland or creek.

Most of the land in Bloomington's watershed is developed. This means that about 34 percent of our land is covered with hard, impervious surfaces that can no longer absorb rainwater. This poses a problem because storm water running off hard surfaces, such as rooftops, roads and driveways, harms Bloomington lakes



and wetlands through the pollutants it carries. Storm water runoff also causes flooding and increases erosion.

You can make a difference by stopping storm water where it drops and preventing excess water from running off your property. Once stopped, water either soaks into the ground, evaporates or is used for gardening.

How to prevent storm water runoff

There are several easy and economical techniques available to stop and infiltrate water.

- Use downspouts to direct water onto lawns. Having roof water run off and spread across your lawn will allow the water to infiltrate your soil.
- Purchase a rain barrel to capture water from roofs. An 80-gallon barrel emptied regularly can capture 3,275 gallons of water per year.



- Plant a rain garden. A 100-square-foot rain garden can capture and infiltrate 9,000 gallons of water per year. Native plants in a rain garden increase infiltration and attract a variety of birds and butterflies.

For more information, contact Engineering at 952-563-4870.

**VISIT THE BOUTIQUE
FOR LOCALLY HANDCRAFTED
TREASURES AND MORE**

Give a gift with meaning this holiday season by purchasing something locally made at the Creekside Boutique, 9801 Penn Avenue South.

Boutique hours:

Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Tuesdays, 6 - 8 p.m.
Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**MEMORABLE
MONDAYS**

CREEKSIDE LUNCH SERIES



Human Services presents three themed lunches you won't want to miss this winter:

- **January 24** – Wolfquest Lunch, featuring a presentation on wolves by Leah Darst of the Minnesota Zoo.
- **February 28** – Hot Cocoa Social, including delicious hot cocoa, lunch and door prizes.
- **March 28** – Minnesota History Lunch with historian Joseph Nicollet.

Reserve a spot at least two days in advance by calling 952-563-4944.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CREEKSIDE

**RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES
HUMAN SERVICES SUPPORTING OUR CITIZENS**



Human Services provides exceptional programs and services to community members of all ages. For more information, call Human Services at 952-563-8733 or TTY 952-563-8740. To sign up for e-mail updates, go to our website, click on [E-Subscribe](#) and subscribe to "Human Services."

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HUMAN SERVICES.

TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE AT CREEKSIDE

Human Services is partnering with AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP Tax-Aide to make tax assistance programs available for residents. Tax assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis, **February 1 - April 14**, to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines of \$30,000 or less for individuals and \$50,000 or less for families.

ACCOUNTABILITY MINNESOTA

AccountAbility Minnesota will provide free tax assistance to individuals who meet income guidelines.

When: Tuesdays and Thursdays,
February 1 - April 14.

Time: 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

When: Saturdays, February 5 - April 9.

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

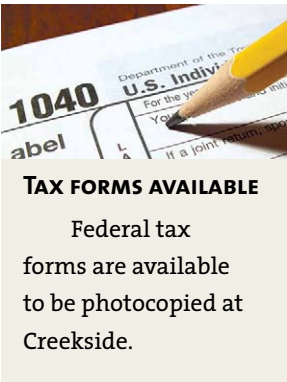
AARP TAX-AIDE

AARP Tax-Aide will provide free tax preparation services to taxpayers with middle-to-low incomes, with special attention to people age 60 and older.

When: Mondays and Tuesdays, January 31 - April 11.

Time: 9 a.m. - noon.

Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance.



TAX FORMS AVAILABLE

Federal tax forms are available to be photocopied at Creekside.



PARTNERS IN FITNESS

**JAPANESE RUNNER PARTICIPATES
IN TWIN CITIES MARATHON**

The Bloomington Sister City Organization (BSCO) welcomed Chikako Hatatani, *pictured above at left*, as part of its annual marathon exchange program with sister city, Izumi City, Japan.

Hatatani participated in the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon in October, completing the course in 4 hours, 25 minutes and 19 seconds.

While visiting Bloomington, Hatatani received a tour of Civic Plaza, including the Center for the Arts and police department.

Bloomington residents Darrell and Lynne Christensen hosted Hatatani during her visit. Darrell Christensen is also a marathon runner and has been selected to represent Bloomington in the 2011 Senshu International Marathon in Izumi City.

Christensen and Rachael Moench will be headed to Izumi City in February to participate in the Senshu International Marathon.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SENSHU MARATHON.

"GET ACQUAINTED"

**HIGHLIGHTING NEW
OPPORTUNITIES**

Residents are invited to learn more about the unique programs and activities offered through the Get Acquainted with the Senior Programs at Creekside event. From dining to woodworking to pottery, the Senior Program has it all. Informational sessions will be held **January 5** and **February 2**.

No registration is required.

**WELLNESS INVENTORY
TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR
HEALTH**

Bloomington Human Services, Parks and Recreation, and Public Health are teaming up with St. Catherine's University to provide health and wellness information to active, aging adults.

This free event takes place **Wednesday, January 19, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**, at Creekside Community Center. A variety of fun activities and useful information for healthy living will be presented. No reservations are required.



GET INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

**ADVOCATE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
BUSINESS RECOGNITION AWARD**

Normandale Community College and retailer Banana Republic at the Mall of America were recognized at a recent City Council meeting by the Human Rights Commission for supporting the employment of people with disabilities.



The Business Recognition Award is presented annually in October to a local Bloomington business that excels in the employment of people with disabilities. The recognition is part of a month-long effort that educates and promotes the employment of people with disabilities.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: DEAM.

**SHOWING OUR
APPRECIATION
VETERANS LUNCH
HONORS SERVICE
MEN AND WOMEN**

Human Services held its third annual Veterans Appreciation Lunch this past November. The event drew 166 people, including several veterans and active duty military personnel. Retired Minnesota National Guard staff sergeant John Kreisel, *pictured right*, was keynote speaker.

Military songs were played for each branch of service. Veterans and active duty military personnel were asked to stand during their song and received thank you letters written by Normandale Hills Elementary and Westwood Elementary students.

Thank you to Girl Scout Troop #11599, Boy Scout Troop #439 and Human Services volunteers for serving lunch to attendees.



TRAVEL TO JAPAN

**JAPANESE CULTURE, CUISINE
AND MORE AT ANNUAL EVENT**

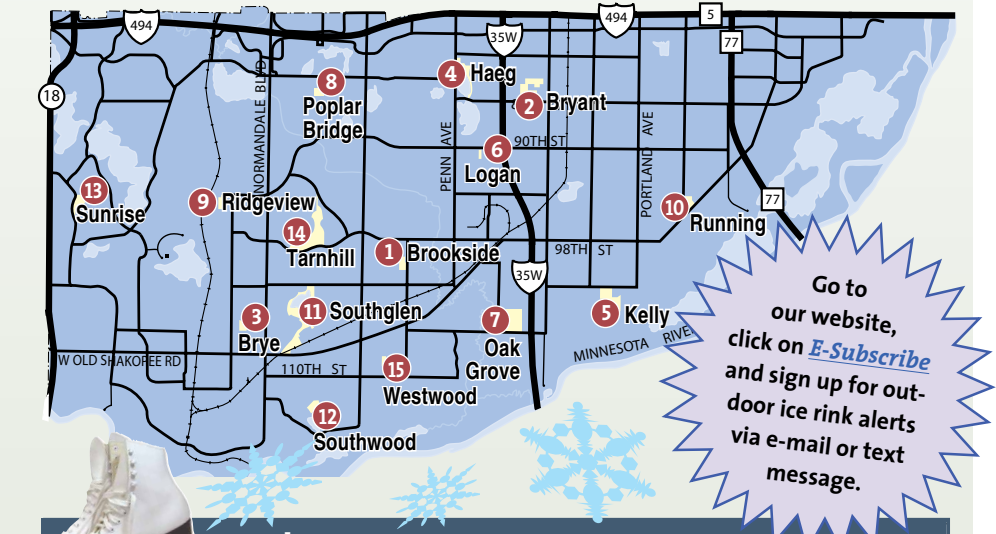
Have you dreamed about visiting Japan, but don't have the time or money to actually go there? Now is your chance to enjoy Japanese culture and cuisine in Bloomington.

Enjoy an authentic Japanese meal, live entertainment and a silent auction at the annual Taste of Japan dinner, **Saturday, March 5**, at the Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington, 3900 American Boulevard West. This annual event is a fundraiser for Bloomington's Sister City Organization.

For more information, visit www.bloomington-izumi.org.

2010 - 2011 OUTDOOR SKATING RINKS

Parks and Recreation will operate 15 outdoor ice skating rinks this winter. During rink hours, all facilities will be lighted, except for Logan Playlot. Some sites are supervised by a Parks and Recreation employee during public skating hours. See below. Weather permitting, park shelters will be open Saturday, December 18, 2010, through Monday, February 21, 2011. For more information, contact Parks and Recreation. For up-to-date rink conditions and closings, call 952-563-8878 and select option 3.



LOCATIONS AND FEATURES			RINK		
PARK	ADDRESS	STAFFING	General	Hockey	Floodlights
1 Brookside	10000 Xerxes Ave. S.	Daily	•	•	•
2 Bryant	1001 W. 85th St.	Wknds, SRD, holidays	•	•	•
3 Brye	10500 Xavier Ave. S.	Wknds, SRD, holidays	•	•	•
4 Haeg	8301 Penn Ave. S.	Not staffed*	•	•	•
5 Kelly	185 E. 102nd St.	Not staffed*	•	•	•
6 Logan	1900 W. 91st St.	Not staffed*	•		
7 Oak Grove	1301 W. 104th St.	Wknds, SRD, holidays	•	•	•
8 Poplar Bridge	4600 W. 85th St.	Wknds, SRD, holidays	•	•	•
9 Ridgeview	6001 W. 94th St.	Not staffed*	•	•	•
10 Running	9501 12th Ave. S.	Daily	•	2	•
11 Southglen	10701 Rich Road	Not staffed*	•	•	•
12 Southwood	4800 Terracewood Dr.	Not staffed*	•	•	•
13 Sunrise	9401 Blmgt. Ferry Rd.	Daily	•	•	•
14 Tarnhill	9650 Little Road	Not staffed*	•	•	•
15 Westwood	3490 W. 109th St.	Daily	•	2	•

RINK HOURS		
DAY OF WEEK	REGULAR	SCHOOL RELEASE DAYS (SRD)
	December 18 - 22, 2010	December 23 - January 2
	January 3 - February 20, 2011	January 17, 24 and February 21
M - F	4 - 9 p.m.	Noon - 7 p.m.
Sa - Su	Noon - 7 p.m.	Noon - 7 p.m.
PLEASE NOTE Holiday hours for staffed rinks are noon - 5 p.m. on the following days: December 24 and 25, 2010. January 1, 2011. February 6, 2011 (Super Bowl Sunday). Lights on at rinks during scheduled hours. *Staffed on a volunteer basis only. Schedules are posted on site.		

GET OUT, GET ACTIVE

WINTER FETE IS WHERE IT’S AT
EMBRACE THE COLD FOR ANNUAL EVENT

Join Bloomington Parks and Recreation and local sponsors in welcoming winter during the ninth annual Winter Fete celebration. This year, Winter Fete activities will take place throughout the city, Friday, January 28, through Sunday, January 30. Don’t miss the Family Chill Out and ice fishing event on Saturday, Winter Fete History Festival on Sunday and other great events during this weekend-long celebration. All activities are free, unless otherwise noted, and fun for the whole family! For more information, call Parks and Recreation.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: WINTER FETE.



VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED
JUMP-START YOUR
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Although summer is still months away, Bloomington Parks and Recreation is already looking for volunteers for their spring and summer programs. Participating in these programs is an enjoyable, rewarding experience and a great way to give back to the community. Volunteer positions are available at a variety of programs and events, including Camp Kota, Summer Adventure Playgrounds, Farmers Market and adaptive softball. For more details on these exciting opportunities, contact Parks and Recreation or e-mail parksrec@ci.bloomington.mn.us. WEBSITE KEYWORD: VOLUNTEER.



NOW PLAYING
BORN AGAIN JOCKS VOLLEYBALL

The Born Again Jocks volleyball league welcomes men, 55 years and older, of all skill levels. Games are held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 a.m., at Jefferson High School, 4001 West 102nd Street. For more information, call Don Wilkie at 952-884-2146.

DREAMING OF SPRING?
RESERVE PICNIC SHELTERS FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS



Picnic shelters will soon be available to rent for next year’s picnics, receptions, reunions and meetings. Registration begins January 3 for use April through mid-October. Shelters have electricity, grills, restrooms and drinking fountains. City parks offer playground equipment, volleyball and horseshoe courts, trails and softball fields. WEBSITE KEYWORDS: PICNIC SHELTER RENTAL.

EAST BUSH LAKE PARK

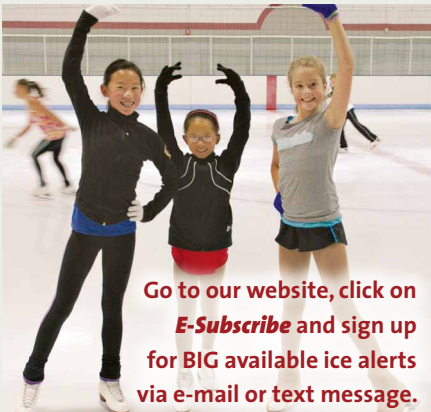
9140 East Bush Lake Road.
Shelter 3: Accommodates 200.
\$281 + tax.

WEST BUSH LAKE PARK

94th Street at West Bush Lake Road.
Shelter 1: Accommodates 200.
\$213 + tax.
Shelter 2: Accommodates 100.
\$145 + tax.

MOIR PARK

104th Street at Morgan Avenue.
Shelter 1: Accommodates 200+.
\$213 + tax.
Shelter 2: Accommodates 50.
\$145 + tax.



BLOOMINGTON ICE GARDEN
INDOOR SKATING RINKS

The Bloomington Ice Garden (BIG), 3600 West 98th Street, has three indoor ice rinks available for public skating and adult open hockey. Professional instructors offer a variety of skating lessons for children and adults. WEBSITE KEYWORD: BIG.

Go to our website, click on E-Subscribe and sign up for BIG available ice alerts via e-mail or text message.

ENJOY BOCCE BALL? NEW STRUCTURES IMPROVE PLAYING AREA

The bocce ball courts at Valley View Playfield, 9000 Portland Avenue South, are ready for warmer weather. The courts recently received a makeover with the addition of three lattice trellises. The trellises will offer some much-needed shade for the players at the six bocce ball courts.

Design and construction was completed by the Tree Trust, a nonprofit organization that involves diverse urban populations in employment, community forestry and environmental programs.

For more information, contact Recreation Supervisor Jason Hicks at 952-563-8880.



AROUND THE TOWN



BIKING THROUGH BLOOMINGTON

CITY STAFF, OFFICIALS PARTICIPATE IN BIKE RIDE WITH MAYOR

Mayor Gene Winstead, *pictured above at right*, recently led 39 City employees, including Civil Engineer Amy Marohn, *above center*, and officials on a bike ride along 86th Street to showcase trail improvements.

“It was great to see a variety of City departments and commissions represented,” Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) Community Liaison Robyn Wiesman said. “Everyone can use this experience as we move forward with projects that increase walkability and bikeability in Bloomington.”

The majority of the ride followed a seven-mile stretch of new bike lanes on 86th Street, with Mayor Winstead pointing out features along the way. The ride was sponsored by the City of Bloomington, the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota and SHIP.

The long-term changes approved for 86th Street include improvements at Lyndale Avenue and safety improvements to the intersections of 86th Street, and Nicollet and Portland avenues.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SUSTAINABILITY.



CORNERSTONE AIMS TO END VIOLENCE

NONPROFIT EXPANDS EFFORTS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC ABUSE

Bloomington-based Cornerstone is a community organization committed to the prevention of domestic abuse.

Just 27 years ago, Cornerstone was only a few members strong. Today, the organization is thriving with a full staff, facilities and extensive programs for those in need.

“Cornerstone is committed to breaking the generational cycle of violence,” said Executive Director Susan Neis. “Many of our programs are designed specifically for children involved in domestic abuse. Just as domestic violence is traumatic for adults, it also takes a devastating toll on children.”

Cornerstone’s Children, Youth and Families program counselors teach children the skills they need to negotiate and mitigate violence in their lives. In addition, Cornerstone created an in-school program called Preventing Abuse and Violence through Education, which was created in 1993 and still serves local high schools throughout the metro area.

In September, Cornerstone hosted their Dream Big 2010 fundraiser event. Guest speakers included U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Dave St. Peter, President of the Minnesota Twins. The event raised more than \$130,000 to benefit Cornerstone programs.

One of the largest domestic violence agencies in Minnesota, Cornerstone works directly with families, offering transitional housing and counseling. They also provide legal advocates who work closely with local law enforcement to assist families with legal matters.

For more information and volunteer opportunities, visit www.cornerstonemn.org.



CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Located in Bloomington Civic Plaza at the corner of West 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road, the Center for the Arts is a first-class facility housing six arts organizations. For facility information, call 952-563-8889. For exhibit information and events, visit www.bloomingtonartcenter.com and click on Exhibitions, or call 952-563-8567.

GALLERY HOURS

Hours:	M - F	8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
	Sa	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
	Su	1 - 10 p.m.

For all theater tickets,
call the Box Office at
952-563-8575.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS:
CENTER FOR THE ARTS.

SCHNEIDER THEATER



AN OLD TIME RADIO CHRISTMAS

Bloomington Chorale presents *An Old Time Radio Christmas*, **Saturday, December 18, 7:30 p.m.**, and **Sunday, December 19, 4 p.m.** Tickets are \$14 adults; \$10 seniors/students.

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON

Celebrate the season with the Medalist Band holiday concert, **Monday, December 20, 7 p.m.** Tickets are \$12 for adults; \$10 seniors/students.

INTO THE WOODS

Bloomington Civic Theatre will perform the classic play *Into the Woods*, directed by Joe Chvala, **January 14 - February 13**. Tickets are \$28 with discounts for seniors and students.

INEZ GREENBERG GALLERY

BEYOND THE BOOK

Beyond the Book, highlighting the work of local childrens’ book illustrators Nancy Carlson, Stephen Gammell, Mike Wohnoutka, Lauren Stringer, Derek Anderson, Beth Peck and Leslie Bowman, runs **January 7 - February 18**.



THE PRINCESS AND HER PANTHER
BY LAUREN STRINGER.

ATRIUM GALLERY

INSTRUCTOR/STUDENT ART SHOW

Come and see what the Bloomington Theatre and Art Center’s instructors and students have created in 2010, **now through January 2**.

NARRA(INTERVEN)TIONS

Narra(interven)tions by artist Micah Bloom, featuring oil and egg tempera paintings that investigate the relationships between domestic harmony and impersonal living spaces, runs **January 14 - March 6**. Artist’s reception is January 14, 6 - 8 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

A Festive Reception takes place **Wednesday, December 8, 6 - 8 p.m.** This event is the kickoff to the Gifts in the Gallery holiday art sale and will feature a “meet and greet” with the artists, door prizes and entertainment. *See page 1*.

The Indoor Farmers Market, the last market of the year, takes place **Saturday, December 11, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

BLACK BOX THEATER

HOLLYWOOD CABARET

Hollywood Cabaret – the 30s, featuring Arne Fogel, Maud Hixson and Nichola Miller, takes place **January 29, 7:30 p.m.**, and **January 30, 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$18 adults; \$16 students/seniors.

FROM MILES TO ASTOR

Jazz band East Side will perform *From Miles to Astor*, a 1960s-style jazz show, **Sunday, January 23, 2 p.m.** Tickets are \$18 for adults; \$16 for students/seniors. Performance sponsored by the Twin Cities Jazz Society.



ON PATROL



WHAT IS YOUR CAR SAYING TO THIEVES?

DON'T BE A TARGET FOR THEFT

During the holiday season, thieves are shopping for gifts in your vehicle. It only takes a thief a few seconds to break into your car and steal valuables left in plain sight. Taking just a few more seconds of your time to secure your valuables could mean the difference between a happy holiday and a holiday spent at the police station reporting stolen goods.

The Bloomington Police Department (BPD) recommends the following tips for keeping your vehicle and valuables safe.

- **Don't leave valuables in your car.** If you must, place them out of sight prior to reaching your destination. Lock items in a glove box if your vehicle doesn't have a trunk. One reason sport utility vehicles and trucks are common targets is because they don't have a trunk to hide valuables.
- **Don't leave any clues that your vehicle contains a valuable item.** Clues include docking stations, connector cables and window-mounted holders. A visible charging cable advertises the presence of a GPS unit.
- **Park in a busy, well-lit area.** Pedestrian traffic and windows overlooking a parking lot provide witnesses. Thieves will tend to avoid these areas.
- **Always lock your doors every time you leave.** Remember, all it takes is a second for a thief to steal your stuff.

If, despite your best efforts, your vehicle is burglarized, or if you happen to see any suspicious activity such as someone loitering in a parking lot and looking into vehicles, call 911 immediately.

For more information, contact the BPD at 952-563-4900.

STAYING ALERT BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS AND GET HOME SAFE



When returning to your vehicle, always carry your keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door and enter as quickly as possible. As you approach your vehicle, scan the area, glance underneath and inside the vehicle, and lock the door when you get in.

SAFETY MATTERS



A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS COOKING SAFETY MADE EASY

Did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? The leading cause of kitchen fires is leaving cooking food unattended. Most kitchen fires start on the stove top. For more information, contact Fire Marshal Gene Dugal at 952-563-8957.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: FIRE SAFETY.

Follow these “dos and don’ts” to avoid kitchen combustion this holiday season.

Do

- **Do** keep children away from cooking areas by establishing a three-foot “kid-free zone” around the stove.
- **Do** have a potholder, oven mitt and pot lid handy.
- **Do** make sure your cooking areas are clean and clear of combustibles.

DON'T

- **Don't** leave cooking food on the stove top unattended.
- **Don't** use a wet oven mitt, because it presents a steam scald danger.
- **Don't** pour water on a grease fire or discharge a fire extinguisher onto a pan fire.



NAVIGATING THREE-LANE STREETS KNOWING WHEN AND HOW TO TURN

In a three-lane street configuration such as the newly reconfigured 86th Street, the center lane is used **only for turning, not for passing**. It is illegal for a driver to cross the solid yellow line in the middle to pass a vehicle. However, if a vehicle such as a transit bus or garbage truck is pulled over on the shoulder and there is adequate space in the turn lane to safely proceed, you may do so. This does not apply to school buses, which drivers must always stop for when the stop sign arm is extended.

The center lane is always shared, for the purpose of making left turns, by traffic traveling in both directions.

To turn left from the center lane, signal, look over your shoulder, and move completely inside the center left turn lane. Make sure the lane is clear in both directions and then turn only when it is safe. Look for vehicles coming toward you in the same lane to start their left turns.

For more information, call Civil Engineer Amy Marohn at 952-563-4532.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: 86TH STREET.

HELPING KIDS GROW STRONG

FORMING HEALTHY HABITS

PROGRAM ENCOURAGES KIDS TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

Big battles are staged at the dinner table between parents and children over broccoli and string beans, but there's good news. Bloomington Public Health, through the Statewide Health Improvement Program, offers child care centers and preschools ways to improve children's eating habits. Through the Healthy Eating and Learning through Play (HELP) program, two new workshops are being offered to Bloomington preschools and day care centers.

“The Learn about Nutrition through Activities (LANA) program provides creative strategies that get children excited about trying new fruits and vegetables,” Public Health Nutritionist Joan Bulfer said.

According to Bulfer, the feedback received from preschool teachers has been extremely positive.

I Am Moving, I Am Learning, another workshop being offered through HELP, is designed to help child care centers and preschool programs integrate physical activity with learning.

Since the program began, HELP workshops have served 18 Bloomington child care and preschool sites. For more information about HELP, contact Public Health at 952-563-8900.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HELP PROGRAM.



EARLY INTERVENTION ANSWERING PARENTS' CONCERNS



Do you have concerns about your child's development? The Help Me Grow program is here to help. Formerly known as SHIELD, Help Me Grow South Hennepin is a no-cost, early-intervention service for children ages birth to five years. The program helps families coordinate resources for their child's healthy development.

Upon request, Public Health nurses will make home visits to assess a child's developmental skills. Children who are falling behind are referred to their local school district for an assessment and possible Early Childhood Intervention Services.

“These services help children catch up to their peers,” Reilly said. “Many of these kids graduate from the Early Childhood Intervention program before kindergarten.”

For more information, call Help Me Grow South Hennepin at 952-563-8904 or e-mail helpmegrow@ci.bloomington.mn.us.